

VZCZCXRO3117  
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHPB  
DE RUEHBK #3388/01 3230004  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 180004Z NOV 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5072  
INFO RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 7439  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 7000  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 0737  
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 0641  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9207  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1188  
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0375  
RUEHBD/AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 3368  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 5381  
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH 2722  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5062  
RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 5195  
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 0616  
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0432  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 4994  
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 7179  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 7443  
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 0842  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 5852  
RUEHJA/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 0065  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 BANGKOK 003388

SIPDIS

EAP for AWYCKOFF,WBEHN; OES/PCI for NFITE, EROSE  
DEPT FOR USAID/EGAT for BBEST, CBARBER; COMMERCE for NOAA; INTERIOR  
for USGS, USFWS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [AMGT](#) [SENV](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: EAST ASIA ESTH HUB WORK PLAN FOR FY09

Ref: State 97800

11. Summary: This cable sets out the East Asian Regional Environmental Officer's ("Hub") work plan for FY09. In accordance with OES and EAP priorities the Hub will focus on three areas of science diplomacy: clean energy, public health and conservation of natural resources combined with law enforcement and sustainable fisheries. The Hub will also support scientific and technological collaboration, educational exchange opportunities, and support climate change initiatives throughout the hub's 16 nations, coordinating with the Suva Hub and Washington. The hub will concentrate its efforts on posts with low ESTH staffing and on four high profile regional projects: the Coral Triangle Initiative, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, the Heart of Borneo Initiative, and the Mekong River Commission. End Summary.

12. The East Asia Hub encompasses 16 nations: Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Some of the posts at these nations have large ESTH sections, such as China, Japan and Indonesia, while others have only part-time ESTH officers. The Hub's principal strategies are to address East Asian trans-border ESTH issues, coordinate interagency work and support ESTH officers at the East Asian posts, particularly those posts where the ESTHoff is not a full time ESTH officer, for example Timor Leste, Laos, Brunei and Mongolia. The hub will also work more closely with the SE Asia mainland countries, due to generally small ESTH sections and the many transnational issues. Around one third of hub work will be on bilateral ESTH issues in Thailand. For both bilateral and hub work, the Hub has one FSO and one FSN; an EFM assistant is expected to start work soon.

13. Energy security is one of the highest priorities for this region.

Nearly one-third of world's population producing about one-quarter of the global GDP is in this region, which threatens sustainable economic development. The Hub will work to help the region reduce the activities that could be causing harmful climate change, develop conservation of irreplaceable resources and the development of sustainable economies with clean energy. East Asia will play a major, possibly predominant, role in determining the future course of the world's economy and in maintaining international peace and stability. Bangkok is the perfect hub for East Asia, as a number of USG agencies maintain regional offices there: USAID, CDC, the Army medical research unit AFRIMS and others. Several influential ESTH NGOs also maintain regional offices, as well as international governmental and financial institutions. By working closely with the action officers and leaders of these organizations, the Hub will be able to coordinate Washington policy with these agencies. The presence of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) is a natural site for regional enforcement conferences. Outlined below are goals, objectives and the focus areas requested in Reftel.

#### 4. CLEAN ENERGY

- Hydropower on the Mekong River - support transparency and mitigation of environmental effects, considering many dams now back on the planning table and limited ESTH time by posts in the Mekong area. Draft cable on regional effects and need for transparency; encourage research; coordinate USG and international efforts. Success will be transparent hydropower decisions and dams with reduced environmental impact. Engage with International Organizations (the Mekong River Commission, the World Bank, and the Asia Development Bank), national agencies (the Electricity

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Generating Authority of Thailand and others), developers, financiers, and others on the issues of transparency and a regional, multi-disciplinary and integrative approach to hydropower development that considers food security and natural resource conservation.

- Air quality - improved air quality in the area's problem cities, for example Ulaanbaatar. Bring USG expertise and best practices to bear in support of ESTHoffs in constituent posts. Seek scientific exchanges with agencies such as EPA. After assessment in some posts with less attention, such as Mongolia, Hub will seek scientific exchanges with agencies such as EPA and Embassy Science fellows.

#### 5. PUBLIC HEALTH:

- The Hub interacts with the various regional agencies in Bangkok: CDC, AFRIMS, APHIS and USAID. Hub will explore and synthesize common trends in the various diseases that agencies are studying independently.

- Avian Influenza, still a dominant health and economic issue in the region; with new stages identified in outbreak analysis, work to get posts to develop revised tripwires; success will be revised tripwires at constituent posts. Continue chairing Pandemic task force at Embassy Bangkok.

- HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, Dengue, Hoof and Mouth and other infectious diseases - from recent conference attendance it appeared that counterproductive behaviors (HIV/AIDS) and inexorable trends (mega-urbanization) are making pandemic risks for many diseases greater than ever. Hub will support and publicize the USG interagency efforts through cable reporting and press releases. Seek funding for Dengue research, currently low.

- Publicize the Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention Centre (REDI) in Singapore, a new organization. Work to integrate its work with U.S. agencies such as CDC, and promote exchanges.

- From attendance at recent conferences, Hub notes many disease researchers today have little experience in program management; identify and disseminate training opportunities for researchers. Success will be organization of new training for researchers in constituent nations.

#### 6. NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

- Coordinate and support regional conservation initiatives: Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), Heart of Borneo, Mekong River Commission and others. Success will include increased hectares of well-managed protected areas with improvement of livelihoods based on natural resources.

- At least one enforcement training event organized during the work

plan year, using the ILEA Bangkok facility. With recent changes to the Lacey Act, prepare outreach materials or organization of a seminar at ILEA on extension of plant products to USG CITES enforcement. Success will be successful enforcement of Lacey Act, particularly for plants.

- Support and report on upcoming regional Wild Cat conference; encourage any new members wanted by the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (Thailand and Malaysia), with a new member as a success metric. Bridge the ASEAN-WEN and CAWT networks if both organizations are interested.
- Support ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN) and work for increased enforcement successes, and SECEN, Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (with USAID), trying to enlist more members. Success measured in increased arrests. NGOs warn of capacity and commitment challenges with AESEAN-WEN; Hub will visit ASEAN-WEN officials with ESTHoffs and stress importance of government commitment. Most importantly, work through ESTHoffs to

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interact with ASEAN nations to fund the program that USAID is now largely funding.

- Fisheries enforcement - develop use of ILEA for training event for CTI and other interested nations.
- Thailand - resolve current issue with export of farm-raised Siamese crocodile through interaction with Thai actors and USF&WS; farmers need to enhance recovery of wild population. Use success in facilitating trade with conservation to model for other posts.
- Monitor and support execution CTI State grant Three Regional Grants monitoring: Thailand/Laos (wetlands management), Malaysia (global environment center) and Vietnam (Regional cooperation for NGOs). Success will be the number of people receiving effective training from these programs, and measurement of the activities the trained persons carried out.

#### 17. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY:

- Foster S&T exchanges, scholarships, visits to the U.S.; look for opportunities and increase the number of placements. This is a dominant theme of all S&T meetings so far; scientists complain of less USG opportunities compared to other nations. Success will be increased or new exchanges or scholarships. ASEAN University Network will be focus.
- Leverage the USGS's DRAGON project in the Mekong Delta as a model for multi-disciplinary science and technology collaboration, including its digital library and public-private sector partnerships. (Explore use of data base as model for public outreach and other data sharing situations, such as CTI).
- Investigate participation by constituent posts in GLOBE science education program; if GLOBE program has faltered or never got started, coordinate GLOBE materials to post and share best practices. Success will be increased use of GLOBE program.
- Genetically Modified Organisms - use public outreach to explain U.S. policy and dispel misinformation. Facilitate scientific exchanges. Success measured by increased U.S. exports and reduction in negative view of the U.S. caused by this issue.

#### 18. REGIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS:

- In general, Hub hopes to support regional projects through solicitation of EAP/OES grants from FY09 funds. Hub will coordinate with Suva Hub and organize grant process to meet objectives for the various regional projects.
- CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE, six-country effort that overlaps with Suva hub and deals with climate change, conservation and economic development objectives. While it may be too early for the CTI nations to assimilate more support by other nations, seek to draw in buffer states such as Vietnam into synchronizing with CTI objectives. Success will be measured by at least one concrete action program by each of the six nations, CTI nation funding and their continued expressed commitment to CTI objectives. While NGOs and RDMA are devoting many man-hours to this initiative, the Hub perceives a need for a regional State Dept officer to coordinate cables, press releases as Hub has done already. Hub will coordinate with Suva hub but envisions being the State regional lead with NGO consortium and USAID RDMA due to the greater involvement of the larger East Asia hub nations. In visits to CTI nations, Hub can use State good offices to ensure the nations continue to commit to

working with regional fisheries management organizations.

- HEART OF BORNEO INITIATIVE, three-country effort within East Asia hub, dealing with conservation and climate change objectives. Success metrics are the same as for CTI. While Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta are well staffed, Hub will assist Brunei with grants

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process, cable reporting and other support as requested.

- MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION and associated projects: Hub will interact with Commission officials to assess and identify ways to build capacity for shared water resource management. Hub will tie in efforts on hydropower dam analysis and ASEAN-WEN enforcement needs. Develop IVP and Science Fellow candidates to assist Commission.
- For all regional efforts Hub will coordinate closely with USAID RDMA.
- ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement network, deals with law enforcement and conservation goals; Hub coordinates USG support activities. Success will include organization of at least one regional training event and increases in arrests of illegal wildlife traffickers.
- Support USAID's Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT) Program, through cable reporting.
- Increase the amount or number of OES grants to trans-national projects.
- Work with Suva and Kathmandu hubs to identify areas for cooperation and coordination.
- STATE DEPARTMENT GRANTS: Monitor and support execution of three Regional Grants: Thailand/Laos (wetlands management), Malaysia (global environment center) and Vietnam (Regional cooperation for NGOs). Success will be the number of people receiving effective training from these programs, and measurement of the activities the trained persons carried out.

¶9. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROCESS PARTICIPATION: During the season for developing the next round of mission MSPs and Ops, Hub will offer support for constituent posts to include at least one ESTH goal paper, disseminating successful models from hub posts. Success will be inclusion of ESTH goal paper and eventual funding where there was none, or increased funding for posts with ESTH goals from last year. The Hub will work with USAID RDMA to identify areas where increased funding is needed. The Hub will also reach out to contacts in other funding sources, such as private foundations (e.g. the Walton Foundation that is working with CTI) to lobby for leveraged funding.

An important focus will be to lobby governments to fund programs such as ASEAN-WEN, reducing USAID support and thereby freeing USG funds for other purposes.

¶10. OUTREACH: The hub aims to communicate to the nationals and governments of constituent posts how the U.S. is helping their respective economic development, governance, climate change and conservation needs. Hub will work closely with the Embassy PAO, USAID RDMA PAO and bilateral missions and their public affairs sections. Hub will concentrate on areas and constituencies where U.S. approval rating is low, such as Indonesia and regions where the ESTHoff is part time or has limited PA support. Hub will make available public affairs products of the Department, NGOs as appropriate and other USG agencies, especially for the regional initiatives. The Hub's newsletter will be re-energized to publicize USG efforts and successes and Hub will explore reaching a wider audience. As Embassy Bangkok is a regional mission for many agencies, Hub will develop an ESTH section for Bangkok's website that will link to cables, the Hub newsletter and press releases. Where needed Hub will develop or coordinate outreach products, especially for regional initiatives, and seek opportunities to speak to audiences directly to promote appreciation of U.S. efforts. The Hub's first opportunity is the planned presentation to ASEAN teacher's conference on U.S. techniques for environmental education; hub will aim for a product that can be used by other ESTHoffs. Hub will also publicize the work of other USG agencies, and U.S. research institutions, such as NOAA and USGS, whose success stories

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sometimes go unnoticed. Hub plans to participate in designing IVP programs tailored to the region's needs, with success measured by the number of such programs and by the number of IVP selectees from



the Hub's region. Particular areas Hub will suggest for IV programs include fisheries enforcement, hydropower planning and operations, wildlife enforcement, forestry, and program management for medical researchers. Hub will work to develop outreach to Muslim areas using OES/STC program; there are negative perceptions of the U.S. in areas of Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand and others.

¶11. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING: Hub will investigate and publicize training opportunities for ESTHoffs, their EFM assistants and LES. Hub will support applications of constituent ESTH staff for Department training with letters of recommendation as appropriate. Hub will also investigate training opportunities for constituent officials and researchers in the U.S. and disseminate opportunities to constituent ESTHoffs. For Hub staff, Hub will seek enrollment in Managing State Projects for LES assistant and the ESTH Tradecraft course for incoming EFM assistant (who will be at Post for three years); we will also identify appropriate E-Learning FSI courses for all three hub members.

¶12. TRAVEL/EVENT PLAN AND TIMELINE: Hub plans to use several guidelines:

- International conferences, in part because of the regional nature of the issue and in part because the local ESTH officer often does not have time to attend. Valuable network opportunity. The Hub might be in best position to write cable that ties together the regional threads;
- Posts with part-time ESTHoffs, to support them;
- Posts that were not visited by Hub predecessor, in this case Mongolia, Burma, East Timor, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia (one trip completed).
- Seek to coordinate travel with USAID RDMA travel for site visits and events.
- Identify, assess and catalogue NGOs and science institutions on visits and disseminate to other USG and NGO actors.
- Each trip would average 4-5 days: events plus day of other ESTH meetings plus day of site visits. Amounts after travel events are for air fare.

OCTOBER

Bangkok--USAID CTI Meeting

Bangkok--USAID AI Meeting

Phuket--International Conference on Dengue Fever \$240

Manila--CTI Senior Officials Meeting \$804

NOVEMBER

Bangkok--International Better Air Quality Workshop

Vientiane--UNDOC meeting on environmental crimes; visit dam sites \$400

DECEMBER

Jakarta -- biodiversity conference (consider, if post cannot cover); use event to publicize CTI. \$971

Northern Thailand - Give presentation on Environmental Education to ASEAN teachers' conference of 1000 attendees.

Cambodia --Accompany Embassy Phnom Penh Science fellow, from EPA, evaluating impacts and sustainability of hydropower projects. \$400

JANUARY

Bangkok Wild Cat summit, with reporting cable.

FEBRUARY

Ulaanbaatar Best time for air pollution problem. Previous Hub officer did not visit Mongolia and post has requested hub visit to bring interaction on clean energy possibilities. \$3225

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MARCH TO APRIL

ESTH Hub Conference (Plan for Jakarta)

ESTH Hub meeting, Antarctic Meeting and consultations. \$3,050.

Consultations will include NGOs, Department and USG agencies to include NOAA, USGS, EPA, and USFS.

MAY

Indonesia World Ocean's Conference, CTI Heads of State Meeting; site visit to Heart of Borneo or CTI site. \$971

JUNE

Bangkok & Laos Wetlands management training course, beginning in Bangkok and ending in Laos. Course may occur in May. (OES grant).

Hub officer or FSN assistant would attend the opening, in Bangkok which includes the coursework. The last ten days are fieldwork, and Hub officer and/or FSN would visit a day or two of fieldwork end and then attend the graduation. \$400 x 2.

DRAGON program summit Laos, bringing wetlands graduates (at USGS request), seeking additional funding as necessary. DRAGON delta research network deals with conservation and hydropower goals and its best practices can be applied to information needs of CTI and HOB.

DECEMBER

Chang Mai - ASEAN summit meeting (if USG can go as observers) To work with USAID to get commitment of ASEAN nations to fund ASEAN-WEN which has so far been almost entirely funded by USAID.

TO BE DETERMINED:

Monitor of Grant - Education for Nature Vietnam - Grant for Regional NGO workshop regarding Wildlife Crime. \$542

Monitor of Grant - Community Peatland Fire and Hazard Prevention Project (Malaysia) \$610

Various Thailand trips for conservation, river management, national park, nuclear facilities and other subjects. 4 Trips within Thailand @\$250 each = \$1000

Burma - as visa granted. \$434

Brunei - Heart of Borneo site visit; S&T meetings. \$601

Subtotal \$14246

Hotel Rooms averaging \$120/night @ 5 nights each (over-estimate) \$9375

Grand total hotels and air fare: \$25,021

JOHN